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Ceramics.

PRACTICAL LESSONS IN CHINA-PAINTING.

II.—PAINTING IN MONOCHROME.

THE list of mineral colors given in the January number of *The Art Amateur* contains none of those that are exclusively for grounds; for, as they will not bear mixing, it is better to defer using them until practice has enabled you to work quite fearlessly. When you first attempt to tint in grounds, employ some color that is not antagonistic to those that are to be brought in contact with it in subsequent applications.

It always seems difficult for a beginner to remember what colors will bear mixing; but it should be easy if he would classify his colors, and, thus identified, keep them in mind. As a general rule, colors that contain no iron are not to be mixed with those that do. There are exceptions, which will be duly stated.

In the first class are the colors that do not contain iron. They are blues, carmines, lakes, purples, and violets of gold. (These are very important; remember them as purples and purplish tints, together with the colors that might produce them.) Also jonquil yellow, mixing yellow, platinum gray, and, lastly, the whites, which are used for a few purposes only.

The second class, containing but little iron; greens and yellows, except jonquil and mixing yellows.

Third class, whose basis is iron; reds, flesh reds, browns, ochres, violets of iron, blacks and grays, except platinum gray.

The colors that must be used with the greatest care are blues, carmines and yellows. The most fusible of these, light sky blue, the lightest carmine, and ivory yellow, must not be applied too thickly, or they are liable to blister and scale in firing. Blues lose their pure tone and become more or less neutral if brought in contact with reds, flesh reds, browns, and ochres. If ivory yellow is mixed with carmine or red the latter will suffer, and probably be quite destroyed.

Yellows are inclined to fire very strong and must be used sparingly; yet some of them may be mixed with colors of the first class even. The carmines acquire a rich tone, approaching scarlet, by having a very little orange yellow thoroughly incorporated with them. Too much yellow gives an ugly bricky hue.

If you should wish to use yellow with greens, take jonquil or mixing yellow; the latter may be used freely. Where a very deep carmine is desired, it is better to paint it in lightly and have it fired, then repaint and have it fired again. This is the safer method with purple also.

Carmine fired at too high a temperature becomes purplish; at too low a temperature, yellowish. It is considered the test color in firing.

The above classification of colors comprises all that are made, while the list given for the beginners' use is limited to those that are very essential. It may soon be desirable to add the few more that have been specified in the rules relating to mixing; but until you have practised enough to get brush and color completely under control, keep to a very simple palette. If you possess skill acquired in other work, in water-colors especially, you can get beautiful results even while thus restricted.

As a horizontal surface is the easiest to manage in painting on china, something in the way of a small plaque or shallow card-basket is most desirable for one of the first pieces. Select, for instance, some study in sepia. Whatever it contains, if you would be equal to copying it readily in any other way, you can do it in minerals. After adjusting it to your china and locating it exactly, sketch it in with the pen that comes with the India ink prepared for the purpose. This is preferable to a lithographic crayon or a lead-pencil, for it is free from the grainy particles that rather hinder one from judging of fine work before it is fired. All such things vanish in the kiln, but sometimes they leave the coloring of the outlines less perfect than anticipated.

You may have formed the reprehensible habit of trac-

ing, instead of drawing in the good old honest way. If you have, and must depend upon it, you may employ any of the usual devices that you are sure to have discovered, and the china will prove as submissive as paper, only moisten it over with turpentine and let it dry first, if you expect it to take a lead-pencil mark. Some of the tracing papers in use will make good lines on china, even without the aid of turpentine. But, however successful you may be in tracing your design, you will need some skill in restoring outlines that are sure to be more or less obliterated during the progress of the work.

It is probable that what you have chosen for copying has something for relief or background that may require tinting; and it is better to learn to produce some little clouded effects before you undertake any perfectly uni-

amount of surface to be tinted consistently covered. Let it stand a few seconds, just until the drying process seems to have begun, then, with a dabber of suitable size, come down vertically upon the surface, rather lightly at first, and harder and harder as the color sets sufficiently to bear it. To give a pretty gradation, some portions may need to be dabbed almost entirely away. When the dabber absorbs too much color to leave an even tint where it is desired, take another. If you fail to get a good effect the first time, wipe it off with turpentine or alcohol, and try again.

For curved or irregular surfaces, a large blender may be preferable to a dabber; use it in the same way, only with less force. The lavender is employed instead of turpentine, because it is slower in drying, and allows time for dabbing. For large pieces, where a great deal of time is required, the color may first be rubbed up with barely enough oil of cloves to moisten it. Too much oil will cause the color to "craze" or crack when it is fired, particularly where it is laid on at all heavily.

Where the tinting has extended too far upon the outlines, wipe it out, and perfect them again. Now, with turpentine as a vehicle, lay on the principal washes, just as you would in water-colors, only do not count on repeating them to attain the right degree of strength. This must be done at once. If you do not get good results, remember you can efface entirely, and renew your efforts, but never patch up. When your picture is all laid in with broad, soft effects, wipe out lights that are not sufficiently spared and give it some hours to dry; then, with smaller brushes, and less turpentine in your color, lay in the deep lines of shade. If any of these are intensely dark, a very little ivory black may be employed. If you disturb the under tint in doing this, it is because your color is too thin and copious, or because your touch is not so light and quick as it should be. You may even resort to stippling and hatching, as you would in water-colors, if you have the skill to do it without working up the color underneath.

In practice of this kind, you need not confine yourself to sepia studies. "Brun rouge riche" (deep red brown) and "violet de fer" (violet of iron) make very pretty monochromes if you can adapt these colors to the copies you may have at hand; it would not be easy to procure copies in like tones. Fine bits of engraving may be copied perfectly. Black must be used delicately, or in firing it tends to coarseness. Soft, light shadows may have a little "bleu ciel clair" (sky blue) mixed with them; for the very light grayish tones, take as much as two thirds sky blue. For very black finishing touches, "vert noir" (black green) may be used. But all the black will lose the dull brownish look and become jetty when fired.

Use the palette-knives named in the list; a steel knife would be ruinous to the colors not containing iron. From the time you begin your pieces until they are in the kiln, see that no dust or dampness comes in contact with them.

H. C. GASKIN.



FIGURE DESIGN FOR DOUBLE TILE DECORATION.

(FOR HINTS FOR TREATMENT, SEE PAGE 69.)

form surface tinting. Take for this purpose some very fine linen or cotton cambric, free from starch, and not too old, and, forming some balls of white cotton that is picked over carefully, tie them up in round dabbers, varying in size from the bulk of a chestnut to that of an egg, and having the main surface broad and smooth. Make a good store of these, so that you can always lay your hand on a fresh one.

The mineral color called sepia is too much of a raw Sienna tint for your copy. You may take brun 4 foncé (dark brown), and, with your palette knife, rub it up in spirits of lavender until it will flow freely. With one of your largest sable brushes pass over the surface washes as broad as the design will admit of, until you have the

AFTER the amateur has accustomed himself to the colors and shades to be got from his palette, and to decoration in flat tints, he should make a few experiments in modelling. For this purpose take any piece of white porcelain and draw a circle on it with carmine in gummed water. Then, with a billiard-ball or other round object before you, attempt to give relief to your circle with any dark color. Afterward shade other circles with other colors until you know how each color will act on a shaded surface. Generally, in shading, you lay the tone for the light first; make it perfectly evenly gradated with the blender, then lay the mass of the darker shade and graduate it in the same way. Lastly, work in the middle tint over the light with slight hatchings and stipplings, taking care not to disturb the under color. This method may be varied, and great facility of hand acquired, by practising occasionally the modelling of a ball at one operation with the blender; and, again, entirely by stippling or hatching and by superposition with two or more firings.